

॥ Shri Hari ॥

Gita on Character Building



Tvameva

Maata

Cha Pita Tvameva

Tvameva Bandhusha Sakhaa Tvameva

Tvameva Vidyaa Dravinam Tvameva

Tvameva Sarvam Mama Deva Deva

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Gita on Character Building

Human body is only for attaining God (*Paramatma*). etc. Therefore, if one becomes determinate on the one aim of God Realization, then man will turn towards God. On turning towards God, good qualities-good conduct come on their own, and character building begins to take place. However, if man forgets about God Realization, and begins to hoard worldly possessions and enjoy sense pleasures, then he falls down in character. **He who loses his character, is not even worthy and deserving of being called a man.**

“Par drohee par daar rat par dhan par apabaad |
Te nar paanvar paapamai deha dhare manujaad ||
(Manas 7/39)

Bhagavad Gita's entire spiritual instructions are for building character. Previously, *Arjuna's* sentiment was to fight the war, therefore he invited Lord and accepted Him in the form of a charioteer and became ready to enter the battlefield to fight. However, Lord's intent was to see to *Arjuna's* eternal good (salvation). *Arjuna* said that place the chariot in-between both the armies so that I can see who is present to fight me with both hands. The Lord, did exactly as told and placed the chariot right in between

both the armies and said, that see the members of the *Kuru* dynasty (1/21-25). On hearing the word, *Kuru* dynasty, *Arjuna* suddenly became conscious of his family, affiliated with his body. He became frightened by the thought that all of them will die and thus turning away from his duty, said – I will not fight. **To turn away from one's duty is the main obstacle in character building.** The Lord said – **O' What are you doing? It is your duty to fight, therefore giving up attachment and cowardliness, stand up to fight** (Gita 2/2-3).

It is only to engage man in the path of duty that *Bhagavad Gita* manifested. **It is only in renouncing your rights and properly performing your duties that character is developed, whereas on neglecting your duties the character is destroyed.** God says – “**Na tvevaaham jaatu naasam....”** (Gita 2/12) - Here the Lord begins His spiritual instructions and first deliberates on the body and the indweller, the perishable and imperishable. The point is that **leaving aside (not paying attention to) the perishable things, pay attention to the imperishable. By doing so, character building takes place.**

There is one very important point, that when the aim is of the imperishable, the perishable things will come on their own. You will not have to undergo suffering for them. But if the aim and focus is of the perishable, the imperishable essence will not be attained, and one will have to worry and make an effort for the perishable. And further ahead Lord says, that see toward one's innate duty, therefore it is only beneficial to fight the war of righteousness for a Kshatriya. (Gita 2/31). The point is that **it is only by fulfilling duty that man progresses, and by**

going towards non-duty he takes a fall. The main thing in fulfilling one's duty, is to renounce desires, proprietary interest and attachment. The meaning of renouncing these is that one should not have the aim of "jada", the inert (insentient). Previously the body etc. were not ours, later on as well, they will not remain ours and at present too they are separating from us every single moment. If this kind of alertness is awakened then the aim will not be of the inert and the senses, the inner faculties will be restrained and controlled on their own. In self-control itself is the building of character. In lack of control and lack of restraint, progress is curtailed and with that the character falls.

In the beginning of the third Chapter, *Arjuna* asks that why are you engaging me in these most sinful acts? Lord says – though these appear to be very sinful on the surface, than too one must fulfill their duties by giving up selfishness, proprietary interest, egoism, and desires. By doing so, the dreadfulness does not remain, only the action remains. Actions can be various according to one's *varna* (order of life) and *ashram* (stage in life), but the terribleness, the filth, the passion , all lead to one's downfall, and it arises due to desires. Keeping desires in the forefront if one reads and shares with others the spiritual messages (with the aim of money or other things), it is considered demoniac tendency and one cannot escape sins; even on listening and sharing spiritual truths, good character cannot be developed because **desire is the root of all sins** (Gita 3/37). However, if the aim is God, then even though engaged in worldly duties and activities, then too good character will come in them. Therefore, in the

third chapter, Lord gives great emphasis on renouncing desires and doing one's duty. Similarly, in the fourth chapter it has been said that when there is no desires, when there is no sense of pride in doership, then all actions become inactions, in other words, even while doing karma, man is not bound; because his aim is to go towards God. In the fifth chapter also says to fulfill one's duty -

**Yuktah karmaphalam tyaktvaa shanatimaanoti naishthikim |
Ayuktah kaamkaarena phale sakto nibhadhyate || (Gita 5/12)**

"He who is a Karmayogi, who by abandoning attachment to the fruit of action, attains everlasting peace (God Realization); whereas, he who acts with a selfish motive, being attached to the fruit of actions through desire acquires bondage." Fruits (objects) are the kind that will be born and will later perish, but the desire for them is what is binding. Desire makes one fall in character. When character takes a fall, there is lack of peace and whereas building character, one attains peace. **The moment there is ill feelings in the mind, one experiences lack of peace. And the moment there is good feelings within, peace immediately follows.**

If you are attentive, then it is every man's experience that the more that he renounces the perishable, that much peace, joy, equanimity, good qualities, continue to come in him and the more that he desires the perishable things, that much lack of peace, discord, anguish, burning infliction, and bad qualities arise.

In the sixth chapter also, it has been said to engage in God having "That" as the aim. That God is present and

pervading everywhere. He who sees Me (the Universal Self, God) present in all beings and sees all beings existing in Me (*Paramatma*), I am never out of sight for him, nor is he ever out of my sight.

Yo maam paschyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pashyati
Tasyaahum na pranashyaami sa cha mein na pranashyati
|| (Gita 6/30)

That man who sees other's sorrow and happiness as his own happiness and sorrow, he is an eternal yogi -

Aatmoupamyena sarvatra samam pashyati yorjuna |
Sukham va yadi vaa dukham sa yogi paramo matah ||
(Gita 6/32)

He who has the sentiments - Let there be no sorrow such a one attains God (*Paramatma tattva*). How can the suffering of all come to an end? How can all be happy? One who has such sentiments - their character is the highest of all. Further when the conversation lead to bringing the mind under control, then the Lord revealed about study and practice "*abhyas*" and detachment "*vairaag*" (Gita 6/35). In other words, there too the talks are about removing the mind from the world, and engaging it in God. When talking about progress in the life beyond this world, there too the same has been intellect is only in God, he is considered the best among the yogis (Gita 6/47). He who walks the path of God, if his spiritual practices comes to an end in the middle and he dies then too he will be benefited, he will attain misfortune (Gita 6/40). Those who do work for the welfare of all, even if their work is left incomplete, he will be benefited. He whose mind and It is only eminent to be engaged in God.

He who is not devoted to God, God calls him an evil doer (Gita 7/15) and he who is devoted to God, he is called virtuous (Gita 7/16). The point is that **he who walks the path towards God are called virtuous and benevolent, and he who walks the path of the world is called an evil-doer.** Further ahead it is said that **he whose actions are pure, whose character is great, they become unyielding in their spiritual pursuits and do worship and devotion of God** (Gita 7/28).

In walking the path towards God, remembrance is the key point. In the beginning of the Eight Chapter, on questioning by Arjuna, the Lord said that he who leaves this body while remembering Me, he attains Me - of this there is no doubt. (Gita 8/5).

Because whatever the sentiments and feelings that are recollected at the time of leaving the body, that alone he attains. (Gita 8/6) Therefore God says, that keep in mind and remember Me at all times - **“Sarveshu kaaleshu Maamanusmara”** (Gita 8/7). Then God said something extra-ordinary that he who remembers Me at all times, for him I am easily attainable.

**Anayacheta satatam yo maam smarati nityasah |
Tasyaham sulabh paarth nitya yuktasya yoginah ||**
(Gita 8/14)

To remember God is a divine trait. It is innateness the root of good character. The meaning of being in remembrance of God is - that remembering and recollecting the innate relation that we have with God, that very relationship, is the one only real relationship. I do not have a relationship with the world. I have only

assumed a relationship with the world, therefore this relationship does not last. It is clearly seen that the relationships we have in this birth, they were not there in the previous birth, and they will not be there in the next birth. In the same way this world is constantly changing, but God is the same, as Is, and I myself am also the same. Therefore my relationship with *Paramatma* is eternal. Remembering this itself is recollection and remembrance (*smruti*). Thinking can also be of the world, but “*smruti*” can only be of God. On having such recollection and remembrance, good character is axiomatic.

He who is inclined towards God, becomes the best of all. There is greater gains among those who walk the path of God with aim of God, than the gains that come from Vedas (holy texts), sacrifice, austerities, charity, visiting holy places, fasting etc. (Gita 8/28).

Therefore inclination towards God is considered to be the sovereign of sciences (king of all knowledge), most mysterious, supremely holy, most excellent, directly realizable, endowed with virtues, very easy to practice and imperishable (Gita 9/2). God finds Himself to be so easy to attain, that “he who with devotion offers a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water etc. I partake in that thing., (Gita 9/26). Therefore, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice (yajna), whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever you do by way of penance, dedicate it all to Me, then you will be freed from bondage of actions having good and bad results; and freed from

them you yourself having completely surrendered shall attain Me (Gita 9/27 – 28).

Whether a man is evil or good – he must not worry. The main point is that that he is engaged in God. On becoming engaged in God, his bad conduct cannot last. He can very quickly become righteous and he attains eternal peace (Gita 9/30-31) . Women folks, *Vaisyas*, *Sudras*, and even those that are born of sinful wombs taking refuge in Me, attain the Supreme God. (Gita 9/32-33). However many different “*jaatis*” that are present, of these externally there is the separation due to nature, but from within all are a part of God. Therefore in worldly relations, the importance is of conducting one's self according to one's “*Varna*,” but in the path of spirituality, there is no importance of “*varna*” etc. because in the form of divinity (being a part of God), every one's true nature is pure and all are equally entitled to God. God says, that “**Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, adore Me, prostrate to Me, thus making yourself steadfast in Me, and entirely surrendering to Me, you will reach Me.**” (Gita 9/34). The point of all this is that only be engaged in Me.

In the tenth chapter on Arjuna's pleading, God described His super human powers and His Universal form. The essence of what He said - “**I am all pervasive in the World. Wherever you see something extra-ordinary, (glorious, brilliant, powerful), know it to be a manifestation of a spark of My splendor**” (Gita 10/41). That specialty is due to Me alone. The point is that wherever whatever you find brilliant, abundant,

remarkable, there too, the sight should turn towards God. There after he says “**what is the reason for you to gain detailed knowledge? I stand supporting the entire Universe, with a single fragment of Myself.**” (Gita 10/42) On hearing this, Arjuna, desired to see that Universal Form of the Lord, in Whose single fragment is the entire Universe. The Lord bestowed Arjuna with “*divya chakshu*” (special divine vision) to behold this sight. * On seeing the divine vision, Arjuna became perplexed, became filled with fear, became charmed. Then God said that this is your foolishness. I am the same One, then why are you fearful?

In the twelfth Chapter, Arjuna asked “**he who worships the Imperishable and the Unmanifest and he who worships God with attributes (*bhaktimarg*), which of the two are better versed in yoga?**” (Gita 12/1). The path of the Imperishable, Unmanifest (*jnana marg*), are using their own effort, but in the path of “*bhakti*” the dependence is on only God. In the path of the Imperishable, divine attributes, discrimination and detachment etc. have to be acquired, but in the path of devotion, **on taking refuge in the Lord, divine qualities, good attributes and conduct are automatically and naturally acquired** (Gita 12/7). Therefore God says that “**you give your mind and intellect to Me alone, there upon you will live in Me alone.**” (Gita 12/8). God says - the devotee who is living in Me alone, is most dear to Me. As such, all the beings are dear to God, but he who takes refuge in God, he is most dear to God. Simply by being devoted and engrossed in God, good qualities and conduct come on its own, without any effort.

In the thirteenth Chapter, God describes the path of knowledge (of the Imperishable), and while he describes good qualities such as “absence of pride” (*amaanitva*) etc., he brings up “**Unswerving Devotion to Me with sole dependence on Me alone**” – “**Mayi chaananyayogen bhaktiravyabhichaarini**” (Gita 13/10). In the Fourteenth Chapter also there is talks about devotion “*bhakti*” - “**He who worships Me with unadulterated devotion, rises above the three modes and becomes eligible, for attaining Brahma**”. (Gita 14/26). It is only due to affinity with attributes (*gunas*) that demoniac traits are born, due to which births in higher and lower forms take place. On walking the path of Divinity (God), one rises above the three modes.

In the fifteenth chapter God reveals His extraordinary glories and radiance and says that I am the Supreme Personality (Supreme Soul) over both the “Insentient” (Perishable) and “Sentient” (Imperishable Embodied Soul). (Gita 15/16-18). He who knows Me as the Supreme Personality, the Highest Person, is “**sarvavid**” the knower of all, and he worships Me, with all his being. (Gita 15/19). Divine traits naturally manifest in him who is devoted to Me and worships Me. Therefore in Sixteenth Chapter, God gives the description of “Divine Traits”. But, he who has become distant from God, who only wants to nourish his own body, to engage in sense enjoyments and in hoarding, demoniac tendencies manifest in him. God elaborates at great length those demoniac traits in the Sixteenth Chapter. He says, Divine traits leads to liberation, whereas Demoniac traits lead to bondage. (Gita 16/5), and such a person attains birth through 8.4

million different wombs (Gita 16/19) and goes to hell. (Gita 16/20).

In the Seventeenth Chapter, the Lord describes the three modes - of goodness (*sattvic*), passion (*rajasic*) and ignorance (*tamasic*). Even on seeing this, the goodness and divine sentiments are among those that have a disinclination for the world and inclination towards God. They rise above the sentiments of passion and ignorance. Thus those who perform the acts of sacrifice, penance and various acts of charity for God, then such acts are of the mode of goodness and they are liberating. (Gita 17/25). However if they are done for the world, i.e. with aim of honor, fame, pleasure, rest and relaxation etc. and sacrifices, austerities, charity etc. done with negligence and ignorance, then they become of the mode of passion and ignorance.

In the Eighteenth chapter, God elaborates in great detail, *Sanyaas* (*Sankhyayoga*) and “*tyaag*” (*Karmayog*). In the end God concludes that leave dependency of all *dharmas*, and only take refuge in Me.

“*Sarvadharmaan parityajya maamekum sharanam
vraja* |

Aham tvaa sarvapaapebhyo Mokshayishyami maa
suchah || (Gita 18/66)

All the work in the world, all accomplishments, all progress, all is encompassed in that one – “*sharanagati*” (taking refuge in the Lord”. God says that all the sins that

are there, evil qualities and conduct, I will free you from these. You do not worry. By My grace, the divine traits will come naturally, on their own.

Just as a child that stays in his mother's lap, gets provided for, is nourished, taken care of and he grows, similarly, on taking the refuge in the Lord, all the good traits and conduct will come unknowingly. Building of character will take place on its own.

In this manner, in the entire *Gita* if one sees then there is only one point - walking the path towards God, i.e. becoming inclined towards God. The aim of going towards the Lord is itself an aid in preventing the fall of one's character. All evil qualities and conduct come from desire for sense pleasures and hoarding. Of this, the importance of money and dependence on it, leads to the worst downfall. By this, man's character goes down. When character takes a fall, people talk ill of him and he is dishonored.

A man who has fallen in character, he is lower than even animal and those dwelling in hell; because animal and hellish ones are suffering the consequences of their past actions, and are moving towards human birth, but by incurring sins, a characterless man, is moving towards animal life and hell! Association of such men is the kind that will lead to downfall. Therefore it is said -

Baru bhal baas narak kar taataa |
Dusht sang jani deyi bidhaataa || (Manas 5/46/4)

Therefore for improving your character, become inclined towards God, that is – **I am God's and God is mine. I am not this world's, the world is not mine.**

The mistake that man makes is that which is not his, those thing that belong to the world, he considers them as his own, and that which is actually his, i.e. God, he does not accept as his own. As such, if it is seen, the things of the world are his only for proper use. But for himself, God is his very own. Because the things belong to the world, therefore they have to be offered to the world for serving and man himself is God's, therefore he must surrender himself to God. Neither he has to take anything from the world, nor does he have anything to take from God. If something is to be taken, then let that be God Himself.

By desiring things of the world, one establishes a relationship with the world. Desire arises from attachment, i.e. desire arises by considering the body, wife, son, wealth, etc. as mine. Now if we think and accept the body, wife, son, wealth etc. as our own, can we say we have an independent right over them? Can we keep them as long as we like? Can we stay with them forever? If the answer is No! Than what is the difficulty in getting rid of the sense of mine-ness? By leaving the erroneously accepted sense of mine, desires will not arise. When desires do not arise, automatically there will be a feeling of mine-ness with God; because God is eternally ours from time immemorial and God is ever-attained. On having

sense of mine-ness with God, feelings and conduct will be purified.

Body, wife, son, wealth, house, various possessions, are they real or unreal – this doubt may arise, but our relationship with them is unreal, of this there is no possibility of doubt at all. On knowing the unreal as unreal, the unreal relation is renounced very easily and on becoming inclined towards God, the eternal relationship with God is automatically awakened. Thereafter good character and conduct comes on its own and man becomes a role-model of good character, in other words, his character becomes one that is worthy of respect.

Yadyadaacharati shreshthasttdevetaro janah |
Sa yatpramaanam kurute lokastdanuvartate ||
(Gita 3/21)

Whatever an ideal person does, he is followed by others, as well. Whatever standard he sets, the world follows the same.”

A person of good character is never dependent. An ideal person is entirely independent, capable, eligible and entitled.

Narayana ! Narayana !! Narayana !!!

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